

## Contributions

### MISSIONARY OUTLOOK FOR THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: OUR OPPORTUNITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Read at National Conference by J. C. Cassel.

My topic is too large to be satisfactorily treated in the few moments of time set apart for my address.

The missionary outlook for the twentieth century, whether hopeful or hopeless altogether depends upon the standpoint of one's vision. If we expect the world, the masses to be saved for Christ there is absolutely no foundation for a hope that it will be accomplished thru the twentieth century and to my mind not thru twenty centuries. Past failures and present conditions, and the Master's predictions of failure are the basis of my despair. After twenty centuries of Christianity in the world only one man out of sixteen is saved and the proportion is growing smaller rather than greater as statistics clearly show.

But if we expect to see some saved in every nation, people and kindred and the whole world evangelized and civilized then the aspect is very hopeful, if the Lord tarries. The history of the closing century and the prophecies of the Bible are my basis for this hope. The Prophet Isaiah declared that all the ends of the earth should see the salvation of our God, and Jesus declared that the gospel of the kingdom must be preached as a witness to all nations before the end will come.

At the beginning of the present century modern missions were not known and the few men that had the faith and audacity to suggest the possibility of opening the closed nations and evangelizing the benighted world were regarded as imbeciles and lunatics. They were ostracised, ridiculed and scorned and yet today almost every nook and corner of the globe is open to the gospel. True there are yet exceptions and there is opposition, but Satan in his efforts to frustrate the purposes of God has always over-reached himself and his work has turned out to be to the glory of God in the bettering of mankind. It was a devilish act on the part of Joseph's brethren to sell their brother because of their jealousy, and yet it turned to the glory of God in the raising of Joseph to the throne of Pharaoh and all the resulting blessing that it has brought to the world ever since.

It was a diabolical act for Judas to betray the Master, and for Pilate to crucify him and yet those acts were over-ruled to bring the greatest blessing to mankind, even the very redemption of the world. And so it will be with the opposition that Satan may arouse in the conquest of any of the nations for God.

It may not be possible for the missionary of the cross to enter every nation or people or kindred with peaceful measures and as an ambassador for Christ he can use no other, if he did, he would destroy the potency

of his claim, but God has other servants with other motives, other men with other duties whom he uses for the accomplishment of his purposes. This is strikingly demonstrated in the history of the past and the events of the present. A few hundred years ago the Pope ruled the world with satanic cruelty, today he is a prisoner in his own Vatican; Spain almost the only country that he predominated in these later days has been broken. Cuba, Porto Rico, the Philippines are the latest additions to Protestant Christian territory. In China Satan is now making a last death struggle but where are the real Christians that doubt the victorious outcome of the contest for God and humanity. Just as sure as God is greater than the devil so sure the missionaries of the cross must be permitted to preach Christ in China. Principalities and powers are ordained of God with a mission; they will perform that mission and the fittest will survive.

Then there are other hopeful forces. The church and missionary comity being developed in which the late Ecumenical Conference was a great factor will prove a great advantage. The phenomenal growth of wealth in Protestant Christian countries will greatly contribute to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth.

We have reached a period in the world's history in which God's dear children believe the prophecies, feel the force of the commission, with the world open, the means of communication and transportation developed with money and men in abundance, and back of all this the promise of the presence of Jesus to whom all power is committed in heaven and in earth. Surely the outlook is altogether hopeful.

With this hopeful outlook the opportunities are almost limitless. It is estimated that there are a thousand millions of people now living that know absolutely nothing about saving grace or regenerating power, all in dense darkness as to their source and destiny. And then there are probably four hundred millions more that are only Christians by name, with no conception of the real Christ. The vastness of our opportunities is probably the greatest source of despair.

Now then what are our responsibilities? They are just exactly equal to our opportunities. This applies to the Christian government, to the Christian church as a whole, to every separate denomination and every individual in every church. Moreover we are all responsible for the evangelization of the world because the work is definitely and specifically and exclusively committed into our hands by no less an authority than the Lord Jesus Christ himself. We are doubly responsible because the Master who has all power has promised to be with us. Then again we are responsible because it is possible. A few weeks ago I saw a Chinaman whose very face shone with the glory of God, a Christian that would put many of us to shame; he is simply a representative of

his race. Millions more like him can be brought to Christ by the same gospel.

Nearly all of us have read the story of Sammy Morris. He was simply a representative of his race, what he was others can be made. At the Ecumenical Conference Bishop Ridley gave the following account of his own work among the Indians of Caladonia, British America: "When I first went there in the evening after a long day's work ascending against the current, we would for the night camp, making our camp fire with caution lest the smoke betray us to hostile people near. As soon as the cooking was done we put out the fire most carefully and set a watch. Oh, the contrast now. Then there was not a Christian from tidal waters for hundreds of miles to where the rivers rise in the midst of the mountains. Now there is not a tribe or community without its church and school and bands of Christians. Then it was perilous for the white men to ascend those rivers; now he is welcomed; and often time at nights, after supper, when we have prayers, my Indian crew lift up their voices in song, (and sweet singers they are) and when we have finished we hear from the other shore, from some island in the river similar sweet sounds crossing the waters. Oh, how sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a land like that 'where Satan once held full sway.'"

These few instances of marked results in missionary work tell in a few words the history of missions.

If we as a church have any real excuse for a separate organization, if we maintain truths essential to salvation that others do not have, our responsibility is probably greater than that of any other church because we are young and small and the great world knows practically nothing about us. I have been on these grounds for weeks and have met many people, but only few that knew anything about us, right here in Indiana, the heart of our church, and yet they ought to know us.

It is, however, evident to me that somehow the seal of God's power and blessing is upon denominations, larger and more popular than we are in this land of open Bibles and religious liberty, so that I personally do not feel quite the deep sense of responsibility in preaching our peculiar doctrine to people that are already partly preached to death, as I do for the regions beyond where the Bible is not known, where people are in superstition and idolatry.

Remember I am looking into the twentieth century. Some of us have already lived a half century or more, consequently we cannot expect to extend our influence very far into the next, the responsibility therefore rests upon you young people. Now a closing word to you especially. We claim to have the whole gospel of Christ; if that be so we owe it to the world to demonstrate that fact in our lives. The mere teaching of the philosophy of salvation, the mere declaration of the plan of redemption is not